

Says He'd Free Yanks for 10M

Saigon, Aug. 9 (Special)—An American civilian recently conferred with United States officials and claimed he could obtain the freedom of American airmen held captive in Laos for about \$10 million, reliable sources disclosed today.

The bizarre offer was made by an unidentified American who met with U.S. Embassy officials in Bangkok. Sources said he maintained he had secret contacts with high-ranking officers of the Communist Pathet Lao in Laos. He said that with their intervention he could obtain the release of Yanks held captive by the Laotian Reds.

Sources said embassy officials in Thailand were skeptical but may have put the man in touch with the Central Intelligence Agency. While there is no exact count on the number of Americans being held by the Pathet Lao, scores of U.S. Airmen, among 150 missing over Laos, are known to have fallen into their hands.

There was no immediate indication that the offer was connected with the recent mysterious attempt to charter a Scandinavian Airways System plane supposedly to transport 183 American PW's held by North Vietnam from Vientiane in Laos to the U.S. Both the U.S. and North Vietnam branded the report as a fake.

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